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From: Skahen, Mary (EHS) <mary.skahen@massmail.state.ma.us>
Sent: Friday, August 26, 2011 5:09 PM
To: Hanchett, James (DPH)
Subject: A Message from Secretary Bigby regarding Hurricane Irene

Dear Colleagues:

As you know, Hurricane Irene is expected to reach Massachusetts at some point between Sunday evening and Monday morning and the Governor has declared a State of Emergency effective 12:30pm today. The latest information from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) indicates that it will make landfall on Long Island on Sunday, and move through central Massachusetts as a Category 1 hurricane. While there is still some uncertainty about Irene's exact track and timing, it is virtually certain that Irene will impact a large area of Massachusetts on Sunday. I encourage you and your families to take steps now to prepare for the impending high winds and heavy rain.

Here are some steps you can take to protect yourself, your family and your homes.

- Shop early for staple food items like bread, peanut butter, and bottled water.
- Have flashlights with fresh batteries and a battery-operated radio on hand for use in the event of a power outage.
- Bring inside all lawn furniture and gas grills.
- Remove window air conditioning units that are not well secured.
- Make sure your car has a full tank of gas in the event that evacuations are necessary.
- Make a personal preparedness kit that includes a first aid kit, extra prescription medication, and a list of medications/allergies for yourself and your family.
- Identify an out-of-state contact person who can communicate among separated family members as needed. It can be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an out-of-town contact may be in a better position to communicate among loved ones who are separated.

Please visit the MEMA website for additional information: www.mass.gov/mema. The site offers vital information about personal safety, evacuation planning, strategies for protecting your home, and other important topics. The site will be updated regularly with information about the approaching storm. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also has a website that includes valuable information about hurricane preparedness: <http://www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/hurricanes.html>.

I hope that you and your families stay safe during the storm.

JudyAnn Bigby, M.D.

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